

OCTOBER 9, 2003

**SCHAKOWSKY ANNOUNCES OPPOSITION
TO PRESIDENT BUSH'S REQUEST
FOR AN ADDITIONAL \$87 BILLION
FOR HIS FAILED POLICY IN IRAQ**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Chief Deputy Whip, announced that she will vote against President Bush's request for an additional \$87 billion for his failed policy in Iraq.

Schakowsky said, "The most galling part of this debate is that the Bush Administration and Republican leadership are blackmailing members of Congress to vote for this blank check with the threat of being accused of not supporting the troops. Yet it is they who are guilty of sometimes tragically disregarding troop safety and comfort and betraying our veterans. We want the American people to know, in no uncertain terms, that there are Democrats willing to stand up against this reckless and dangerous Administration, and we want to reassure our colleagues that if they join us in voting no, they will not stand alone."

Schakowsky's statement from today's Capitol Hill news conference is below:

"I am proud to be standing with members of the United States House of Representatives and citizen leaders - patriots all - who refuse to be "rubber stamps" for President Bush's failed policy on Iraq - who say NO to an \$87 billion blank check for an ongoing war and occupation with no end in sight, and no plan to get there.

"Because Americans awaken nearly every day to hear the name of another dead soldier, and because at least another \$1 billion is being borrowed every week to finance this war of choice, we feel a weighty obligation to demand accountability before another cent is authorized at this time."

"I, for one, will not be an enabler to an Administration that clearly cannot be trusted with our treasure, our lives, and those of the Iraqi people. I say NO to \$87 billion more until:

- The team responsible for this ill-advised war and its chaotic aftermath are fired -**

starting, but not ending, with Sec. of State Donald Rumsfeld and his assistant Paul Wolfowitz.

- There is a clearly defined plan that fully engaged the international community and the United Nations in a decision-making role in the peacemaking and rebuilding of Iraq, and includes an exit strategy for the U.S. and a realistic proposal for Iraqi assumption of power.

- Possible war profiteering by private contractors like Halliburton (from whom Vice President Cheney receives \$13,000 each and every month) is fully investigated and ended, and until Iraqis who have proven they can perform the work at a small fraction of the cost and given many of the jobs. No to \$6,000 telephones, no to \$33,000 pickup trucks, no to \$50,000 prison beds.

- There is a complete accounting for the \$63 billion that was just appropriated in April, plus an explanation of why the nearly \$400 Billion one year defense budget is still insufficient, and no until we are told how much more must be borrowed and when.

- U.S. taxpayers' needs for improved sewers, school buildings and electric systems stop being sacrificed so that those taxpayers can bear the full cost for newly built systems in Iraq and continue to award the wealthiest Americans with huge tax breaks.

- Our troops are taken care of and force protection takes precedence over private contractors as our first priority.

"The most galling part of this debate is that the Bush Administration and Republican leadership are blackmailing members of Congress to vote for this blank check with the threat of being accused of not supporting the troops. Yet it is they who are guilty of sometimes tragically disregarding troop safety and comfort and betraying our veterans.

"I personally have talked to mothers and relatives who are sending their soldiers huge packages every week that include items like sunscreen, insect repellent, shampoo and sanitary napkins. Worse, tens of thousands of our soldiers were sent to war without modern body armor, quality boots, jammers that block the signal between bombs and detonators. Many soldiers are wearing jungle camouflage because there is not enough desert camouflage to go around, and some may have chemical attack prevention suits with holes in them. (Thank goodness they found no chemical weapons.) Mail delivery

has been slowed down by weeks due to civilian contractor no-shows, and one-third of the 1st Armored Division's Bradley vehicles are unusable due to lack of spare parts, and overall 46% of the spare parts needed by the Army are not available in Iraq.

"While we can't predict right now how many of our colleagues will join us in voting no, there is widespread concern in the Democratic caucus over this supplemental. But we want the American people to know, in no uncertain terms, that there are Democrats willing to stand up against this reckless and dangerous Administration, and we want to reassure our colleagues that if they join us in voting no, they will not stand alone."